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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
@cedarvillenews

Documenting a Trash Dump Community in Ethiopia

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- There are places in the world where people scavenge trash dumps to survive. These people have little hope of improving their lives. Mischelle McIntosh, assistant professor of communication at Cedarville University, is forming a summer mission team to document one such place in Ethiopia.

McIntosh, assistant team leader Jeff Gilbert, assistant professor of journalism, Gary Phillips, Cedarville electrician and photographer, and five Cedarville communication students will document an Open Schools Worldwide program dedicated to educating children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

McIntosh first worked with Open Schools Worldwide in 2012 when she helped make promotional videos for their initiatives in South Africa. Since then, Open Schools Worldwide has joined with Beyond Borders to work in the TeachBeyond division. Last year, McIntosh was contacted by TeachBeyond to be a videographer for a documentary in Greece.

After that successful trip, TeachBeyond contacted McIntosh to consider working on promotional videos about their work in Addis Ababa at the trash dump named Koshe, or Qoshee, which is the word “dirty” in the Amharic language of Ethiopia. The video will help raise funds and persuade volunteers to serve there.

“The families are so poor there that the children help their parents by scavenging the garbage dump all day to try to find things that they can recycle for money so that they can buy food,” explained McIntosh. “These children are really marginalized. So they want to set up this Open Schools Worldwide program under the TeachBeyond umbrella. Otherwise, they would never be able to go to school.”

Beyond Borders uses trained local volunteers to present the specially designed TeachBeyond curriculum to the 20 children enrolled in the Koshe school. These local volunteers will also serve as guides and translators for the Cedarville team. Along with Beyond Borders, Brook Hills Development Organization will partner with the team to provide housing. Cedarville’s Global Outreach Ministry will also assist the students in raising funds.

“We are undertaking this project because we believe that storytelling is truly powerful and can effect real, tangible change,” said Abby Shaffer, a junior professional writing and information design major from Burke, Virginia. “As God guides us to empathize and connect with the people in Koshe, we pray that He will use our work to point our audience to those in need and also to Him, the ultimate supplier of our needs.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,380 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more

than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.